

TWO UNRECORDED PUBLICATIONS BY WARREN KING MOOREHEAD

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Warren King Moorehead (1866-1939) was a very prolific author on American archaeology but it is still surprising to find two early articles by him that have been completely overlooked in the bibliographical and archaeological literature. In particular, these are cited neither in Morgan and Rodabaugh's comprehensive *Bibliography of Ohio Archaeology* (1947), in the Peabody Museum's extensive Tozzer Library catalog (*Anthropological Literature*), nor for that matter in my own *A Bibliography of Ohio Archaeology* (Murphy 1975).

The first article appeared in *The Illustrated American* of July 12, 1890, and was a brief description of "Moundbuilder relics," including Arkansas pottery, a cordmarked jar from Fort Ancient, and slate "ceremonials" from southern Ohio (more specifically, from the Miami Valley, according to a caption that accompanies the same photo in Moorehead's *Primitive Man in Ohio*).

Three photos are of somewhat greater interest, however, for although provenience of the illustrated artifacts is not specified in this particular article, it can be determined from close reading of Moorehead's 1892 book; also, these photos are of considerably better quality than those appearing in the Moorehead book. The Hopewellian artifacts (copper earspools, drilled bear canine, flake knives, shell beads and panther incisors) all come from the Porter Mound near Frankfort, Ross County and are so identified in *Primitive Man in Ohio*.

In addition, the article in *The Illustrated American* includes a fascinating photograph that has not been found elsewhere and is reproduced here for the first time. Two very ghostly looking "Mound-builders' skulls" sit on either side of a "shell ladle," all labeled from Brown County, Ohio. (Figure 1) Reading Moorehead's account of his 1888 excavations along the East Fork of the Little Miami River, his description of the excavation of Mound Six, on the farm of Mr. John Boyle, Brown County, provides the following information: two burials were recovered, one in a clay altar and wearing a thin copper headdress, the other having no artifacts associated with it. Moorehead's account of how the skulls of these burials were treated leaves no doubt that they are the ones included in *The Illustrated American* article:

The skulls of these two skeletons were very fragile and it required the utmost care to secure them. As soon as uncovered they were given a heavy coat of varnish, left in the sun for half an hour to dry thoroughly, and then another coat of varnish was put on. When this had dried they were removed from their resting-place, packed in cotton, in baskets, and then carried to Cincinnati by hand, so there would be no danger of breakage. This amount of trouble may seem uncalled for, but as there is only a comparatively small number of Mound Builders' skulls in the United States, one cannot be too careful with specimens in good condition."

Moorehead did not reproduce this photo in *Primitive Man in Ohio*, very possibly embarrassed by the way the cotton stuck to the varnished skulls.

In any case the cotton "aura" certainly provides an eerie look to the skulls.

Despite the photo caption, the *Buscyon* marine shell ladle was not found in Brown County. Although it is nowhere else illustrated in Moorehead's work, it is clear from his accounts of the excavation of the Porter Mound (Moorehead 1889, 1892), that this is one of two shell ladles found in the Porter Mound near Frankfort, Ross County. The first was found about a foot below the surface near the western margin of the mound and measured 10-1/2 inches long, filled with clean fine sand (Moorehead 1892: 118). A second "outer whorl of a seashell" 12-1/2 inches long was found next to a cremated burial on the mound floor. This was also filled with fine sand (Ibid.: 120). Without a scale, it is impossible to tell which of these two shells is the one shown in Moorehead's *The Illustrated American* article. Very likely Moorehead did not include the photograph in his later account of the Porter Mound excavation because the photo included the Brown Co. skulls.

The second article (Moorehead 1896) appeared in *The Archaeologist* section of *Popular Science News* and describes the 1889 opening of five mounds along the east side of the Scioto River, on the third terrace, three miles below Chillicothe, on the farms of Redman and Janes. Moorehead earlier (1892) gave a description of this activity in his *Primitive Man in Ohio*, referring to them as Mounds 34 to 39, and Hothem (1989: 40) synthesizes the data from Mound 36, though he locates these mounds three miles east of Chillicothe, instead of south, a mistake apparently dating back to Webb and Snow, who seem to have misread Moorehead's original description of the location (Webb and Snow 1945: 110).

Since Moorehead's 1892 account is more detailed and readily available, I will only address a few apparent discrepancies between the two accounts even though both accounts are based upon his field notes. In the first Redman mound (No. 34), Moorehead reports a fragmentary skeleton, but in 1896 writes "nothing was found."

The second Redman mound (No. 35), 7 1/2 feet high and 55 feet in diameter, proved very productive. The original ground surface was marked by a small depression 5 by 6 feet filled with charcoal, ashes, burned bone, and more than thirty entire fresh-water naiad shells. Three feet north of this deposit was a circle eight inches in diameter, made of small pebbles. Three feet to the west and a foot above the mound base was an adult skeleton and another lay at the same level near the west end of Moorehead's trench. A third burial three feet above the base and near the center had a necklace of 42 copper beads, a naiad shell and five snail shells.

The third Redman mound (No. 36), on the second terrace proved the most productive. It was eight feet high and 50 feet in diameter, yielding fifteen skeletons. At the base, seven feet into the mound were more than 200 pieces of pottery that "constituted whole vessels when deposited." A central area 24 feet in diameter had been heavily

fired on on this floor rested the remains of fourteen adults and one child. These were covered with a layer of charcoal a foot thick. In or on the right hand of the child were two copper rings and three shell beads. With an adult were twelve flint knives, a sandstone tube pipe, a hematite celt and a granite celt, all deposited on the outer right side of the skeleton. Between the femora of another skeleton was an unfinished sandstone pipe, two gorgets ("perforated ornaments"), and ten flint implements.

In illustrating the artifacts from one of the two Janes mounds (No. 39), Moorehead also includes "beads from mound on west side of Chillicothe." Fortunately, the caption for the same illustration in his *Primitive Man in Ohio* indicates that these are from his Mound 43, one of a group of four conjoined mounds on the Worthington estate originally described by Squier and Davis (1848: 170, fig. 57). Moorehead indicates that these lay northwest of Chillicothe, Squier and Davis but correctly locate them about five miles due north of Chillicothe, southeast of the Dunlap earthworks and on the west side of the Scioto River, opposite the Cedar Banks earthworks.

Although the main interest of these two previously forgotten articles by Moorehead is bibliographic, they do provide better examples of some of his later illustrations, as well as illustrations of some artifacts that were never illustrated elsewhere. They also provide examples of how Moorehead would frequently contradict himself in minor details when condensing or rewriting accounts for the popular press.

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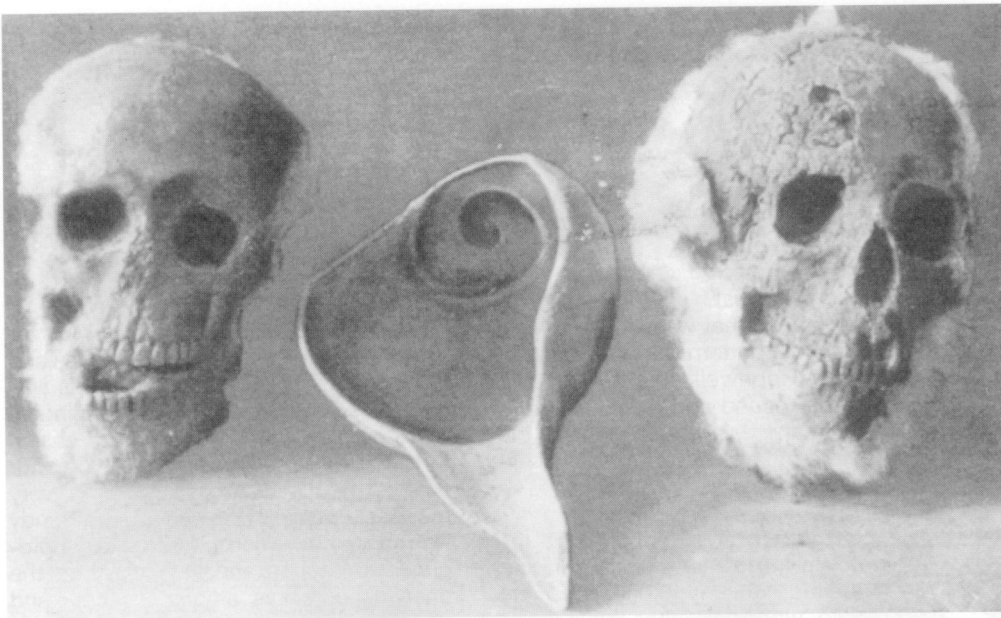


Figure 1 Cotton-wrapped skulls from the John Boyle Mound (Moorehead's Mound 6) Brown Co., Ohio. Buscyon shell dipper from Porter Mound, Ross Co.

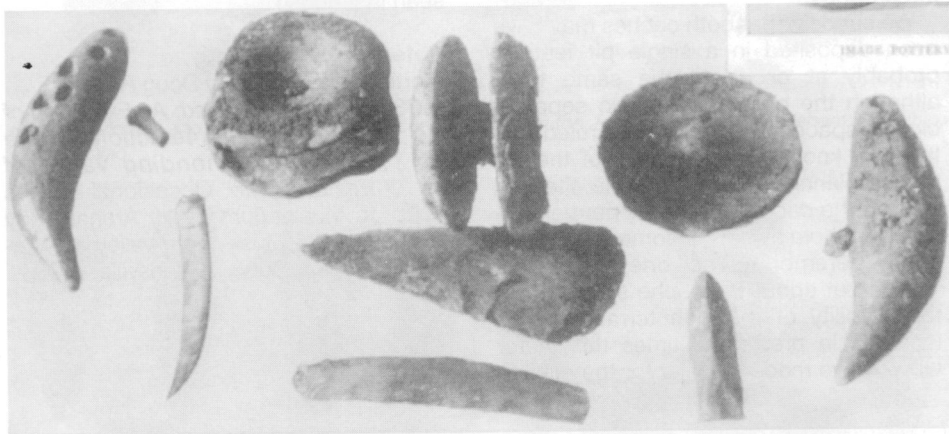


Figure 2 Copper Earspools, drilled bear canines, flint flake knives from Porter Mound, Ross Co., Ohio (Moorehead 1890)

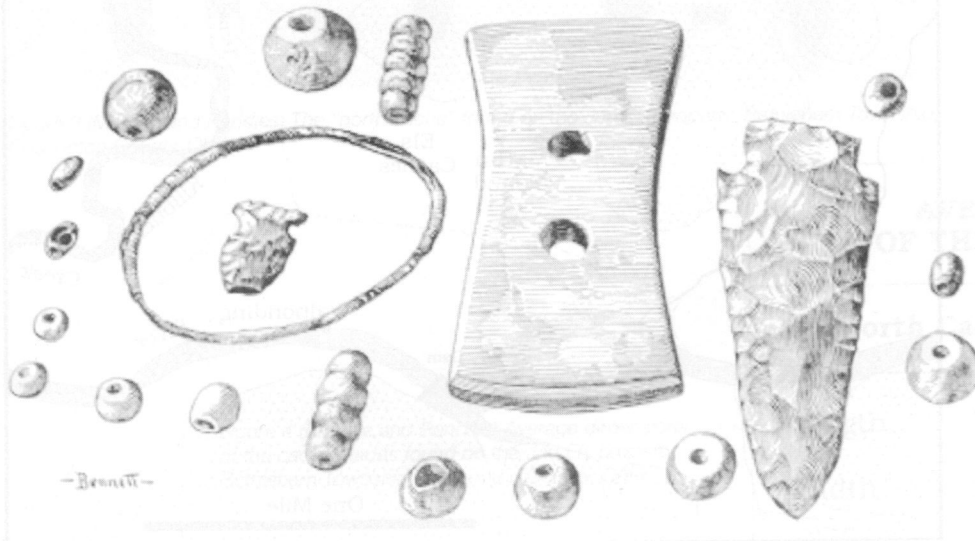


Figure 3 Shell beads from the Porter Mound, near Frankfort, Ross Co. Other artifacts from the Janes Mound (Moorehead Mound 39), Ross Co.